

D

526

.2

J6

UC-NRLF



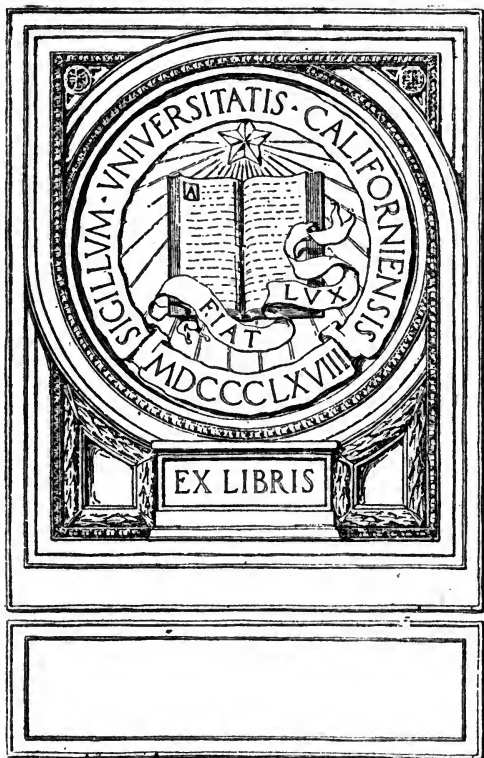
5B 743 012

# THE AVENGERS

AND OTHER POEMS FROM SOUTH AFRICA



G. MURRAY JOHNSTONE



# THE AVENGERS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

## "ONE SMITH"

### **MORNING POST.**

"The stories that 'One Smith' has to tell are mainly sad, and often tragic, and the masculine restraint with which he tells them adds rather than detracts from the pathos. They are graphically written with a true soldier-like brevity and force that is quite attractive. Soldier virtues and soldier vices rather than descriptions of fighting are what 'One Smith' has mostly to talk about, and he ought to find many willing to listen to his yarns."

### **GLASGOW HERALD.**

"The stories are eagerly told; they have the merit of brevity; the action is always circumscribed and vigorous. We touch reality alike in expression and sentiment—a book worth reading."

### **DIAMOND FIELDS ADVERTISER.**

"The author has succeeded in presenting a very vivid picture of the war, and his 'yarns' have a virility and freshness that is altogether pleasing. Sometimes the ending is so unexpectedly tragic that the reader is left almost breathless with surprise."

### **NATAL MERCURY.**

"His experiences, as told in the book, make charming reading. The book will recommend itself to South African readers, being racy and amusing."

### **IRISH DAILY TELEGRAPH.**

"This is a budget of fine breezy stories. Smith is of the veld, and his stories have all the love of wild freedom which the vastness of the South African plains seem to cast over those who in any degree become worshippers of the wild. But it is not merely his own deeds that he recalls in his own breezy and vivid vernacular, the deeds of others are recounted in a manner that is most captivating. Mr. Johnstone has created a character in Smith."

### **JOHANNESBURG SUNDAY TIMES.**

"The reader who picks up this book will not be disappointed. He will read Sergeant Smith's tales of the war, with their terse language, their vivid descriptions, and their crude humanity, with interest and entertainment. The author is gifted with a telling imagination, with a dramatic instinct, and with the art of using the right word in the right place."

# THE AVENGERS

AND OTHER POEMS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

BY

G. MURRAY JOHNSTONE

("MOME")

CAPTAIN, SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES

AUTHOR OF "ONE SMITH"

ERSKINE MACDONALD, LTD.

LONDON, W.C.1

D-526  
12  
1/2

*All Rights Reserved*  
*First published December 1918*

THE  
JOURNAL  
OF  
THE  
ROYAL  
SOCIETY

TO THE MEMORY OF  
2ND LIEUTENANT FRANCIS HENRY  
SOMERSET

SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY

DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN FRANCE

JULY 1916

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

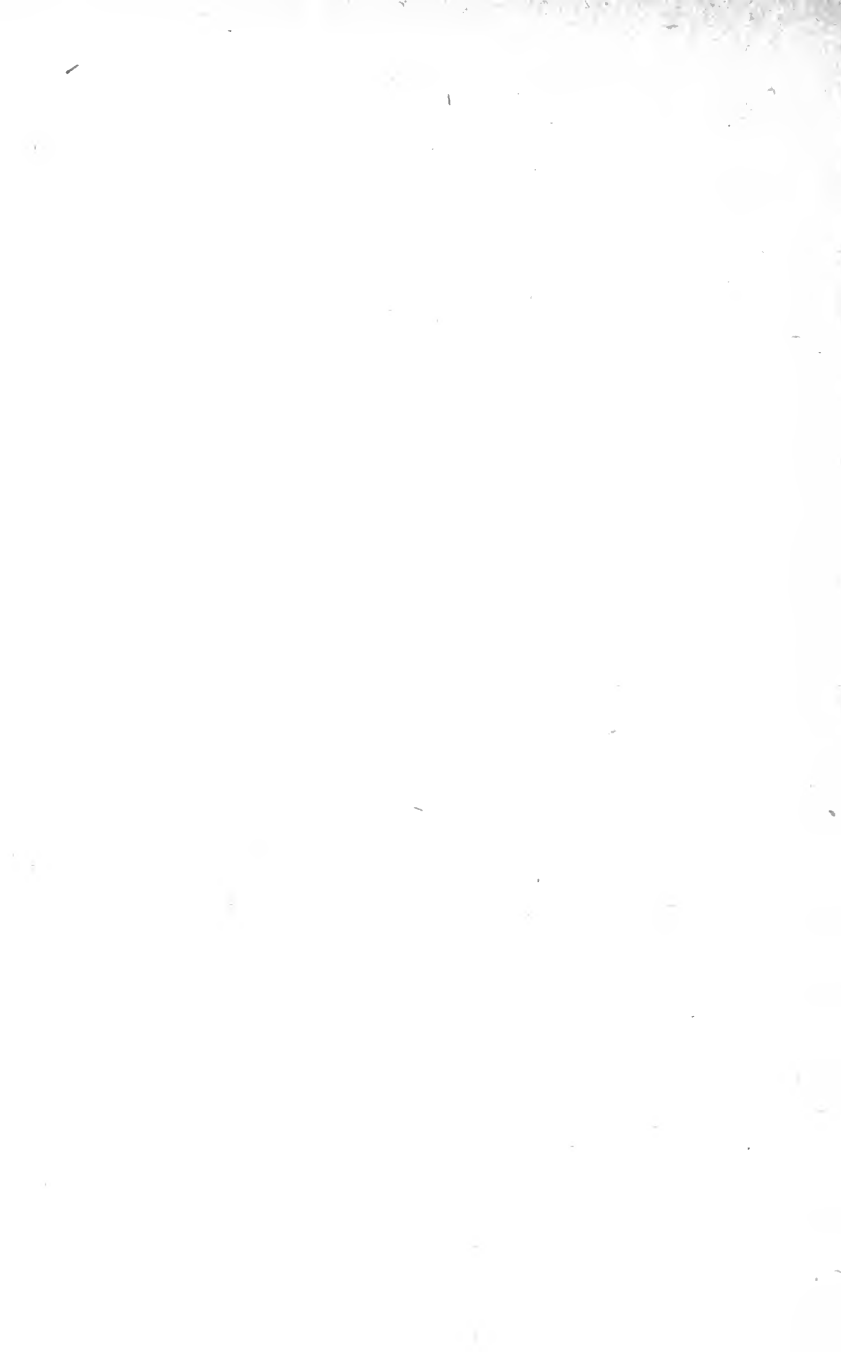


# CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE AVENGERS . . . . .	13
A PRAYER . . . . .	20
HIS HORSE . . . . .	21
THE SUBALTERN'S PAL . . . . .	22
THE CHARGE . . . . .	23
FROM A TRAIN WINDOW . . . . .	24
LAST POST . . . . .	25
MARCHING (SOUTH WEST AFRICA) . . . . .	26
MARCHING (EAST AFRICA) . . . . .	28
ONE OF THE MOUNTED POLICE . . . . .	29
TO THE MEMORY OF MANY GALLANT GENTLE-	
MEN . . . . .	30
PICKET . . . . .	31
THE WOMEN'S PART . . . . .	32
ON OUTPOST . . . . .	33
THE FLAG AND THE GUNS . . . . .	34
LAUGHING EYES . . . . .	36
BILL'S CROSS . . . . .	37
THE BANDAGE . . . . .	38

	PAGE
WAR . . . . .	40
THE WIFE . . . . .	41
LITTLE HEART OF ROSES . . . . .	43
NO HOMEWARD TIDE . . . . .	45
A WET DAY . . . . .	46
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS . . . . .	47
POPPIES . . . . .	48
THE SOLDIER BORN . . . . .	49
THE RESERVIST . . . . .	50
"BE WITH US, LORD" . . . . .	52
PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	53
NOT BY EACH CONQUEST . . . . .	54
VOICE OF EMPIRE . . . . .	55
1914 TO 1918 . . . . .	56
THE NURSING SISTERS . . . . .	57
A SONG OF THE FOOT . . . . .	59
THE ANSWER . . . . .	60
A SONG OF MANY SONGS. . . . .	61
COMRADES ALL . . . . .	65
MARCHING SONG . . . . .	66

THE OUTPOSTS . . . . .	67
" IF WE SHOULD FAIL " . . . . .	68
THE WIDER VISION . . . . .	69
L'ENVOI . . . . .	78



# THE AVENGERS

## BRITAIN

THRO' a pilgrimage of ages we have fought, and  
we have come,

'Midst wrack of salted spindrift and the scud  
a-flying free.

By the death of Richard Grenville and the rolling  
of Drake's drum,

The signal of Lord Nelson and the freedom of  
the sea.

By our island's fairest story and the wooden walls  
of old—

The spirit that has conquered and the hope  
of better things!

By the hidden law of ages that is neither bought  
nor sold—

The law that knows no master and above the  
might of kings!

We have lost and we have conquered, we have  
fought and we have won—

By the hidden mysteries and the law that sets  
us free!

By the weight of truth and mercy! By the  
might of duty done!

And by these same commandments we will  
teach it unto thee—

O thou outcast of the nations, we will teach  
thee charity.

Aye, Christian charity!

## BELGIUM

'Twas I that held your legions,  
'Twas I that stemmed the tide—  
Broken and worn and weary,  
Battered and cast aside;  
'Twas I that held and kept you,  
Fought you from hill to hill,  
Reeling, shattered, and broken,  
Keeping a roadway still.

Broken, but ever forming,  
Battered and red and stark;  
Back through the siege of Antwerp,  
Back through a hell of dark.  
Termonde, Namur, and Brussels,  
God, what a death to die!  
Under the shrieking heavens,  
Under a shell-wracked sky.

Back to the merest margin,  
Staunch to my breed and birth,  
True to the last-fought remnant  
Of what was Belgian earth;  
Back with your marching columns,  
Ever your Prussian heel—  
East, north, south, and westward—  
Hedging my ranks with steel.

Stifling my cry for succour,  
Pounding my battered few,  
And still your grey-clad legions  
Stronger and stronger grew.  
Back and still back they drove me,  
Sword, and rifle, and shell,

Back with my scattered remnant—  
Pressed by your fiends of hell.

Serb and Frenchman and Belgian,  
Never shall we forget,  
Though red the first year's reaping,  
Redder the harvest yet.  
Red are the fields of Belgium,  
Only shall blood atone  
In the full red of reaping—  
The bloodiest harvest known.

#### FRANCE

By my fair stolen provinces, defiled and tortured  
dead,

By sacred soil and slaughtered sons, my love  
of peaceful ways.

By all the things ye wot not of, my daughter's  
laughter fled,

My tears, my shame, my agonies. By memory's  
dark days!

By this and that! God's crucible, and by a  
judgment far.

By this and that, and what is known! By  
the avenging sword!

By all the right of love and peace and tyranny of  
war.

By truth and Christian charity and might of  
spoken word!

By what was mine by right of race and all my  
living sons,

By this and that shalt thou still learn the love  
of liberty.

By steel and shell and sorrowing, through crimson  
flame of guns,  
And by these same commandments will I teach  
it unto thee!

### ITALY

When we sat down in council,  
You spake me true and fair;  
No blood-lust and no murder,  
No hint of theft was there.  
No hint of broken treaties,  
No sign of broken word.  
When we sat down in council,  
Ere yet you drew the sword.

And I, in full endeavour,  
When we made bond alone,  
Pledged to uphold, in council,  
Thy doorways and my own.  
That we together standing,  
In faith would bar the way,  
I and my new-sworn comrades—  
The white-coats and the grey.

Protect, uphold, in honour,  
All that is true and best,  
And you the while I signed it  
Mocked at the hidden jest.  
Knowing that what was whispered,  
By tongues which I thought lied,  
Was but the first full murmur  
Of Europe's rising tide.



When we sat down in council,  
How little did I know  
That 'neath thy shining armour  
Was hid a thing so low.  
Thy vaunted, fair-haired Michael,  
Was but a dream apart,  
Which I, too, mocked when seeing  
The murder in thy heart.

I fear no condemnation  
That I have broken troth,  
Thy deeds have written fairly  
Why I foreswore my oath.  
No heart could hold such knowledge,  
And knowing stoop so low,  
Save those who, planning murder,  
Hath struck the coward's blow.

The Lord Who only knoweth,  
And judgeth men aright,  
Will weigh the truth of nations,  
In spite of battle-might.  
And thou who leapt all eager,  
With storied strength of years,  
Beneath the nations' thunder  
Wilt sheathe thy sword in tears.

#### AMERICA

Long have I stood in silence the while you fought  
and lied,  
Watching you laugh at treaties, sunk in a shame-  
less pride ;  
Making a mock of nations, making a hell of earth,  
You that are old in the sinning, yet young in  
the birth.

Where wounded passed, unguarded, there has  
your navy slain!  
Where liners, steamed, unheeding, there has  
your minefield lain!  
Where women trusting, lingered, there have  
you laughed and shot,  
Making a mock of honour, leaving their bones to  
rot!

Scattered, naked, and bleeding under the sun-  
light there,  
Never a hand to stay you, never a heart to care,  
Nothing has held or kept you, nothing has stayed  
your hand,  
Woman nor wife nor mother, village nor town  
nor land.

You that would prate of Kultur, see you govern  
aright,  
Learn that the truth of nations needs no battle-  
might;  
No red war in the making, scattered and lost  
and far.  
Kultur! if this be Kultur, then—I will give you  
war!

#### CHORUS OF NATIONS

If blood must be the reckoning, and life the  
price of gain,  
Then we will pay in full, forsooth, and double  
pay again.  
Weeks, months, or years, no matter time, our  
guns will roar and pay  
The price of thy full reckoning, so be it what it  
may.

Till black despair shall fill thy heart and agony  
of shame,  
Thou that hast played a despot's part and sworn  
by holy name!  
Thou that would'st rule alone by blood, by blood  
shalt thou atone,  
By blood, and steel, and bitterness, and ways  
that are thine own!

And over all the crash of gun and shrieking whine  
of shell,  
Our trumpets blare in unison proclaiming all is  
well.  
The thunder of our horses' hoofs shall teach thee  
liberty,  
And may it not be meted as was meted out by  
thee!

For we will call a reckoning of stricken land and  
town—  
A full, clean, certain reckoning, and we will force  
it down  
By burnished steel and might of hand, and  
weight of gleaming sword,  
A full and certain reckoning, as counted by the  
Lord!

By all the living strength of men and weight of  
women's tears!  
By foot and gun and cavalry, by the avenging  
years!  
For nought shall hold or check our way, and  
nought shall stem the tide  
Of human wrath and misery and mercy crucified!

For blood must be the reckoning, and life the  
price of gain,  
And we will pay in full, forsooth, and double pay  
again!  
By burnished steel and might of hand, and  
weight of gleaming sword—  
A full and certain reckoning accounting to the  
Lord!

### A PRAYER

GREAT God Who knoweth, and Whose mighty  
arm  
Doth lead and guide throughout the world's  
wide way,  
Through storm and stress, through outer wrack  
and calm,  
Through death's long night and life's eternal  
day,  
Lift Thou our hearts in this sad hour of need—  
Teach us to pray.

Great King of Kings, be Thou our nation's guide;  
Help us, O God! Thy saving grace bestow;  
From sea to sea, throughout our Empire wide,  
Be with us, Lord, in this our hour of woe;  
Help us and hear in this our time of need—  
Teach us to know.

## HIS HORSE

Just let him follow behind it all,  
Sword and helmet and coffin and pall,  
And the stiff still ranks all marching there,  
With not one word but a silent prayer—  
All, just as they do at home.

Trooper and horse let 'em walk behind,  
Still and slow like a man that is blind;  
The horse he loved as he loved his sword,  
Shall step the pace of his once liege lord—  
Yes, just as they do at home.

And yet what a story you could tell  
In your dark bay coat he loved so well,  
You with his boots reversed and the drums  
Muffled and low as the cortège comes—  
All, just as they do at home.

For you could tell of a hard-won fight,  
The rush, the charge, and the battle's might;  
The grim-locked ranks and the stabbing there,  
The cut, the thrust, and the sabres bare;  
But not as they do at home.

And you could tell of the life he gave,  
The cross he won and the early grave,  
The blood-rent wound and the stabbing steel  
Ere you won him clear with hoof and heel;  
And all not a bit like home.

Your great big heart in your saddened eyes,  
Horse though you are you seem old and wise.  
And who may know but in days to be  
When war is o'er and the world is free,  
    He may be calling you home.

So step it slow to the muffled drums,  
The long low roll and the ache that comes  
When last post sounds and the trumpets blow,  
For much he cares and little you know,  
    Now the trumpets are calling him home.

## THE SUBALTERN'S PAL

"AND who are they under the trees?" asked I,  
    "A burial party," the subaltern said;  
"'Tis one of our crowd that was killed last night,  
    He was on patrol and got shot in the head."

"Oh surely not one of your messmates?" asked I;  
    "You have hit it for sure," the subaltern said,  
"For the Hun he snaffled him fair last night;  
    And he made no doubt, for he potted him  
    dead."

"And was he a pal of your own?" asked I;  
    "'Twas my very own pal," the subaltern said;  
"They got him fair, and it's over and done;  
    Yet I'm sorry he's killed," the subaltern said.

## THE CHARGE

Oh! the morning never tasted half so sweet or  
looked so fair,  
And your thoughts are turning backwards as  
you go,  
Your eyes are seeing faces, in a hundred thousand places,  
And how well the fox was hunted years ago.

Oh! the bitter, bitter yearning for the things  
you've left unsaid,  
Oh! the bitter, bitter longing for one word;  
But it's war and desolation, blood, lust, and wild  
elation,  
Oh! it's blow the brazen trumpet, draw the  
sword!

Never mind the fading faces, grip the saddle,  
draw the steel,  
Faith it's good to feel the young blood running  
large;  
To know each mad sensation, feel the hope and  
exaltation,  
And to hear the trumpet sounding for the  
charge.

There's no joy on earth or heaven like the frenzied  
rush of hoofs,  
And the yelling, shouting voices of your men;  
When you see your Colonel leading, some poor  
devil bleeding,  
Oh! there's precious little thought for women  
then.

You forget the fading faces, you forget the  
    women's tears,  
Let 'em beckon back to blazes, let 'em call;  
It's knee to knee together, and if death the  
    squadron sever,  
Well! the tide rolls back without you—that  
    is all!

## FROM A TRAIN WINDOW

(COLENZO, NATAL)

Just you and I at the window  
    (Swiftly the miles pass),  
You and I at the window,  
    Looking through the glass.  
Only the swelling uplands,  
    Only falling rain,  
But what is that on the farm-lands  
    Standing white on the plain?

Only a cross through the window;  
    Look, lass, look again,  
Some one has died for England  
    Out there in the rain.  
Wars that are past and ended,  
    Gone as goes the rain,  
Yet what was given for England,  
    Thank God we give again.



## LAST POST

HEAR you the call of the night-wind,  
Over the land and foam,  
Calling, yet hushed in its calling,  
Calling them home ?

Hear you the wind with the morning,  
Hark 'tis calling again.  
And now 'tis the long reveille,  
Wakening the slain.

Calling, now louder, and calling,  
Squadrons, troopers, and all ;—  
Trumpeter, sound the last rally,  
Sound them their call.

Let it break over the billow,  
Call it over the plain,—  
Trumpeter, know you no sounding,  
Wakening the slain ?

Hear you no weeping of women ?  
Lift your trumpet and blow.  
Have you no call they will answer ?  
Trumpeter, blow.

Answered that trumpeter grimly,  
I blow to a sleeping host,  
There is only one call, they will answer at all,  
Last p—o—s—t, last post.

## MARCHING : SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

HAVE you just sweated in the sand,  
Sweated till your eyebrows crawled,  
And in despair stood up for shade,  
Then lain and sprawled.

Half mad with thirst, half mad with heat,  
Till you could neither stand nor sit,  
Till desert, sky, and air became  
One blazing pit.

While all the rivers you have known,  
The sheltered nooks, the lazy days,  
With green and white against the sun,  
And some one's ways,—

Floated across your aching eyes,  
The drifting punt, the parasol,  
And Mary laughing down the stream  
With Mag and Moll.

Then marched because the order march,  
Came whispered down a burning line,—  
Whispered because parched throats, too dry,  
Were drawn too fine.

While utterance had lost its tongue,  
For heat, and sweat, and sand had won,  
A land of yellow topped with sky  
And blazing sun.

While hell itself could hold no fear,  
No heat beyond the desert's glare.  
Even your souls marched parched and dumb,  
Naked and bare.

But with it you have thanked the days  
That gave you punt and parasol,  
And Mary laughing down the stream  
With Mag and Moll.

## MARCHING : EAST AFRICA

HOLDING on by the hair of your head,  
Holding on when you are well-nigh dead,  
Nothing to eat and nothing to smoke,  
All fever-ridden and well-nigh broke,  
Yet holding on.

Footing it hard through the bush and flood,  
Footing it hard knee-deep in the mud ;  
Helping oxen and helping the carts,  
Soldier, carrier, nigger in parts,  
Yet holding on.

Marching alone right out in the blue,  
Cursing, sticking, and seeing it through ;  
Lost to every one, saving your God,  
Poor little soldier man, poor little sod,  
Yet holding on.

Just holding on and doing your bit ;  
Just holding on and just sticking it.  
So cheero, sonny, fever or flood,  
Rain and bush and the oxen and mud,  
No feather-bed and no eider-down quilt,  
With the whole bang lot fed up to the hilt,  
Yet holding on.

## ONE OF THE MOUNTED POLICE

CARRY him out when the sun rides high  
And the drums are rolling low ;  
Carry him out with his boots reversed  
And the gun-wheels moving slow.  
Out and beyond the little brown dorp,\*  
To the plain beneath the hills ;  
And leave him to sleep in the sunlight,  
Free from all ills.

For his spurs will jingle no more, dear lads,  
His spurs will jingle no more ;  
He's sung the last song he ever will sing,—  
Held the last floor.

Carry him out and never mind why,  
For true 'tis true what is said,  
That somewhere his soul doth smile aloft,  
Only his body is dead.  
Carry him out and muffle the drums,  
Lead out his horse and his friend ;  
Carry him out—have done with it all,  
Hasten the end.

The stars on his shoulders are dull, dear lads,  
The light from his eyes has fled,  
And he who we counted one of the best  
Lies cold and dead.

Out and beyond the little brown dorp,  
Out and beyond to the sky,  
Carry him out, oh carry him out,  
Carry and never mind why.

\* Dorp, meaning village

That which was written is past and done,  
The last little word is said,  
Carry him out with his boots reversed,—  
For he is dead.

And his bridle will clink no more, dear lads,  
His spurs are rusty and red.  
So fill your glasses and drink to his health,  
For he is dead.

## TO THE MEMORY OF MANY GALLANT GENTLEMEN

LAYING their daily work aside,  
In that they did their best,  
Knowing that what they did was done  
And leaving God the rest:  
In that they did acquit themselves,  
And thereby proved the test.

Holding their lives accountable,  
A trusted right unpaid,  
True Christian-minded gentlemen,  
Clean-lipped and unafraid,  
Marching alone to meet their God  
Fearless and undismayed.

## PICKET

STRAINING me eyes in the darkness,  
Gazing away into ink,  
Busting me ears for the things that I hears,  
And thinking the things that I think.  
Looking at nothing come closer,  
Watching that nothing draw near,  
Seeing it plain through the mist and the rain,  
Then finding there's nothing to fear.

Picket, oh, beautiful picket,  
Skylines at night in the cold,  
Sweet little hills with yer mist and yer chills  
And deaths that have never been told.  
Picket, oh, beautiful picket,  
Bridles that clink in the dark,  
Oh me an' you, an' the fears that we knew  
Jest me and jest you in the dark.

Picket, poor devil on picket,  
With steel atop of yer gun ;  
How naked you seemed, when you watched and  
dreamed,  
And thought of the things that you done.  
Counted them all on the kopje,  
Thought of them all and the shame ;  
Jest counted them all the first to the fall,  
And counting them called on her name.

Straining me eyes in the darkness,  
Seeing her face in the ink,  
Busting me ears for the things that I fears,  
And thinking the things that I think.

Waiting for love in the clover,  
Watching for death in the dark,  
Poor little sod, with m' love and m' God,  
Jest praying alone in the dark.

## THE WOMEN'S PART

WOMAN, wife and mother, maid,  
This great war is thine,  
See you face then, unafraid,  
The battle line.

Seeking hope 'neath darkened skies,  
All the might to dare,  
Give the strength that in you lies,—  
The strength of prayer.

Through the frenzied strife of war  
Travail of the night,  
Pray God grant, as heretofore,  
Dawn shall bring thee light.



## ON OUTPOST

'Ave yer stood upon a plain  
An' jest gazed across the earth,  
An' wondered why, an' wondered why,  
Gawd gave yer birth ?

'Ave yer stood an' thought it out,  
'Ave yer worked the whole thing through,  
An' wondered why, an' wondered why,  
Gawd made yer you ?

'Ave yer thought on this an' that,  
Things below an' things above,  
Jest wonderin', jest wonderin',  
On war an' love ?

'As some thought of some one's eyes,  
Strikin' sudden through the gloom,  
Jest showed yer plain, jest showed yer plain,  
Yer bloomin' doom ?

'Ave yer felt a busted cur,  
Felt that you was mighty small,  
Then sort o' smiled, then sort o' smiled,  
'Earin' Gawd call ?

'Ave the thoughts of you an' me,  
'Elped things on one mortal bit ?  
I thinks they 'ave, I thinks they 'ave  
Pushed things a bit.

Though I finds it all day shell,  
Rotten work an' little pay,  
There ain't no rhododendrons out  
On Outpost way.

## THE FLAG AND THE GUNS

WHEN trekkin' it round in the 'ollows  
And footin' it 'ard on the road,  
When nothin's no 'arder than sweatin',  
Save 'umpin' yer load.  
Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful,  
Till sweatin' is sweatin' in runs,  
An' stones ain't no earthly protection  
From somebody's guns.

Oh! what does yer do then m' children?  
Yer lies on your stomach an' shoots,  
Jest you what is foot, an' the forces  
What dies in their boots.  
What 'angs on the edge o' the 'illside,  
Though 'ot as the 'ottest of suns,  
Yer sits an' yer 'angs; but, Lord luv yer,  
Yer yells for the guns.

Jest yellin' for us an' the 'orses,  
"Gawd! buckle an' limber an' load,  
The rifles are shelled on the 'illside,  
Come, give us the road.  
Jest give us the world an' creation,  
Swing out there, make way, an' ha'  
done;  
There's fightin' ahead on the 'illside,  
Make way for the gun.

"An' when it's all over and ended,  
Jest wipe up the muck an' the red;

Jest toast us and drink it in silence—  
The guns and our dead.  
Jest blackened old wheels that are greasy,  
An' they that was somebody's sons,  
Jest that which they fought an' they died  
for—  
“The flag and the guns.”

## LAUGHING EYES

Does yer remember laughin' eyes,  
Or 'ave yer let the shutters fall,  
How we would sit so still and wise,  
Watchin' the shadows on the wall?  
While, nothin' 'eld the odds between,  
And nothin' checked our ship o' stars,  
Nothin', save love's own fancy sheen  
O' golden bars.

Does yer remember all what was,  
And ow' I 'eld your 'and in mine,  
Tellin' yer things what never was,  
Watchin' yer eyes in wonder shine?  
Poor little soul, I lied and lied,  
And stuffed yer full o' fairy tales,  
But what's the odds?—we 'ad a tide,  
And love for sails.

And war was jest a bloomin' thing,  
What never chanced to come our way,  
For life was jest a song to sing,  
A sort o' mornin' rounderlay.  
Till things we never dreamt came round,  
And now I follows beat o' drum,—  
Why all the lies I told you then,  
Are truths to come!

## BILL'S CROSS

"WHAT are you carving there, old man,  
What is the hurry and what is the show?"  
"I'm doin' my bit for my pal," said he,  
"And his name was Bill, and he's gone below."

"Why sit up in the dark," quoth I?  
"And oh, why not wait for the morning  
light?"  
"We're movin' at break o' day," said he,  
"And my little mob they opens the fight."

"We're movin' on and leavin' 'im there,  
I didn't feel easy at all, at all,  
So carved 'im a bit of a mark," said he,  
"Just somethin' in wood that is plain and  
small."

"And this I'll stick at the 'ead o' Bill,  
A sort o' somethin' for others to know.  
For old Bill was a pal o' mine," said he,  
"And I guess his mother would wish it so."

## THE BANDAGE

FLOWERS, give me flowers  
Now I'm laid a'bed,—  
Blue scented cornflowers,  
Poppies dyed with red.  
Give me flowers, sister,  
Crimson, blue and white,  
Flowers for each morning,  
Flowers for the night

Flowers, only flowers,  
So my eyes have rest ;  
Sister, bring me flowers,  
Give me of your best.  
Poppies for each star-shell,  
Roses for the glare ;  
Only bring me flowers,  
Beautiful and fair.

Stunned and doubtful-minded  
With a thousand hells,  
For my eyes are blinded  
With the bursting shells.  
Blue and green and burning,  
Flash a thousand lights,  
Bring me then the flowers,  
Cooling to my sight.

But when they are round me,  
Cool and damp and fair,  
Will you lift the bandage  
So I see them there ?

So that I may see them  
For a moment brief,  
And, perhaps then, sister,  
I may win relief.

So the sister brought them,  
Stacked within her arms.  
Crimson, white, and violet,  
Full of perfumed charms.  
Very sweet was sister,  
And her voice was kind,  
But—she left the bandage,  
For his eyes were blind.

## WAR

DEAR love of mine, sweet wife of all the years,  
Would that the night might hold ourselves  
alone,  
That war, with all its strife, its grief and fears,  
Like some foul dream lie scattered lost and  
flown.

That you and I might tread those lands we love,  
And gather blooms that your small hands  
might hold;  
Oh little love, what idle need to prove  
By my poor words what thoughts would make  
more bold.

You know the road, I know your thoughts and  
mine,  
And God, believing, we will keep them so  
Till this long war be done and stars, ashine,  
Lighten our nights and breaks man's world of  
woe.

Till peace wraps all the world and men no more,  
Wakening at dawn to the loud trumpets' blare,  
Mount and to horse and arming, as for war,  
Ride out to battle and a world's despair.

Till peace wraps all the earth, till then, dear love,  
Keep thou thy prayers and I will keep my sword.  
One sanctuary of thought, one mind above,  
One kingdom of our own, one faith, one Lord.



## THE WIFE

HEART that has spoken to mine,  
O love of the years,  
Must we together combine  
In grief and in tears?  
Is there no sun in the sky,  
No hint of a shore?  
Love, is it only good-bye,  
Only war,  
War,  
War?

Must the seas always divide  
Apart and apart?  
Must you then leave me and ride,  
O heart of my heart?  
Must it be trumpet and drum,  
And rifle and sword?  
Christ! in Thy mercy spare some,  
O Lord of my lord!

Christ! as I whisper and kneel,  
Oh listen and hark!  
Shield him from bullet and steel,  
In light and in dark;  
Be with him, guard him, and fend,  
Oh spare him once more,  
Thou that art Saviour and Friend  
In this War,  
War,  
War.

I that have no one but him,  
My all and my best,  
No laughing vision of him,  
No babe at the breast,  
Pray Thee and ask Thee again,  
Beseech Thee once more,  
Spare me, oh spare me this pain,  
Safe guard him in war.

## LITTLE HEART OF ROSES

LITTLE heart of roses,  
Child of love and sun,  
Tell me, have you altered,  
Little laughing one ?

Little smiling maiden,  
Are you woman grown,  
Reaping rainbow-tinted  
Petals fully blown ?

Do you still remember,  
Baby heart of mine,  
How as Queen of Beauty  
And a mistress fine,

You, would, faith commanding  
Bid me prove my love,  
Playing knight and lady  
With a worn-out glove ;

How I wore your favour  
Till it came to grief,  
And I lost my token,  
Playing make-belief ?

Now I wear another,  
Framed with thought of thee,  
And romance still crowns it,  
Though I older be.

Knight no more in play, dear,  
But in battle wise,  
And though you be grown, love,  
Yet I see your eyes,—

Through the smoke of battle,  
Through a flame of tears,  
Laughing, baby fashion,  
As in former years.

O my heart of roses,  
You who were so small,  
Are you really older,  
Woman-wise, and tall?

No, it is not true, dear,  
(Little day so brief),  
You are still a baby,  
Playing make-belief.

## NO HOMEWARD TIDE

O LITTLE maid and love so late,  
Are you still standing 'neath the stars,  
Are you still waiting at the gate,  
Framed white against the old black bars,  
Straining your eyes along the lane,  
Wondering why I've never come,  
O little love, can hearts explain  
When lips are dumb ?

For love o' mine, you never knew,  
And my own lips could never tell  
How your dear eyes, so trusting blue,  
Revealed my lowest depths too well.  
Your path was not my road, dear love ;  
The hedges were too trim, too neat,  
Like some fair snow-white homing dove  
You were, too sweet.

Your little soul was not for me,  
And those dear eyes which laughed and wept  
Two silent pools wherein to see  
What God's own guardian angels kept  
All hid from human eyes save they  
Whose righteous feet have stood on stars,  
Whose souls have trod the Milky Way  
And know no bars.

They, they alone must know you best,  
And they, perhaps, will understand,  
For though love fills the human breast  
Yet love, alone, doth not command.  
There's half a hundred things, dear love,—  
There's strife, there's war, there's human pride,  
And some have like no homing dove  
A homeward tide.

## A WET DAY

THE slush across the cobbled yard,  
The dismal moaning of the wind,  
The ache that fills, dear Christ, 'tis hard,  
These memories of heart and mind.

And rain comes beating o'er the moor,  
The sheep stand huddled close and still;  
But he will never open door,  
His form will never top the hill.

And all the hedges drip with rain,  
And all the land lies cold and drear;  
But he will never come again,  
Will never, never enter here.

The sun sinks heavy in the west,  
And rain-washed clouds shut out the light,  
While I, with sorrow in my breast,  
Pray God to see me through the night.

## CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

WHEN that which we hold dearest,  
And count as untold worth,  
Our highest hopes ambition,  
The lode-star from our birth ;  
When that which we, we only,  
Have proved, and judged, and know,  
Shall we, when that is threatened,  
Not dare to strike a blow ?

When all our lands lie wasted,  
And half our households dead,  
When eyes we deemed so kindly  
Are gouged and running red,—  
Shall we stand by in wonder  
And call on heaven to ban,  
Stand by and cry for justice,  
Nor dare to act the man ?

When lust and shame have triumphed,  
Shall we still feel 'tis well  
That we, my gentle brother,  
Ne'er sent a fiend to hell ?  
Ne'er drew a bolt in anger,  
Nor slipped a cartridge home,  
But we, so little daring,  
Rode back and bade them come.

Go take your creed to heaven,  
It is no good for earth,  
She still rears fiends incarnate,  
Monstrosities from birth.  
Go you who, greatly fearing,  
Call on heaven to ban,  
Who through your own lost manhood  
Have lost the name of man.

## POPPIES

THEY are waving red in the cornfield,  
Blood-red and nodding fine,  
In sections, platoons, and battalions,  
Like soldiers of the line.

In rank and on rank they are waving,  
Bending, whispering there,  
Them poppies, just beautiful poppies,  
Flaunting scarlet and fair.

But somehow they carry me backward  
To fighting, death, and mud.  
'Tis the scarlet there in the cornfield,  
Soaked the colour of blood.

Yet I loved 'em once, but as poppies,  
(Riot o' scarlet and sun),  
And joyed in the sight of the cornfield,  
When the day's work was done.

Yes, loved 'em I said, and it was so  
When there weren't any mud,  
When poppies were poppies, just poppies,  
And all scarlet weren't blood.



## THE SOLDIER BORN

Oh we that have marched in many ranks,  
Fought with the bravest and best;  
We that have suffered and lost and won,  
Struggled and sweated, marched in the sun;  
We that are we, when the work is done,  
Shall we go back to our rest?

To peace and quiet of early days,  
To an afterglow and calm.  
We, shall we think as we used to think,  
Whisper and talk, shall we flirt and wink,  
Forget we fought and the strife and stink  
And weight of a fighting arm?

Oh we that have slept 'neath God's own sky  
And spoken where speech rang true,  
We that have been where the guns have flashed,  
Scourged and driven and sweated and lashed,  
We that have fought where the shells have  
crashed  
We, do as other men do?  
Maybe, maybe but a four-walled room  
And choke of a feather bed,  
With talk of the little things that weigh,—  
Somebody's tea on somebody's day,  
Who is the neighbour over the way?  
God, we shall wish we were dead.

## THE RESERVIST

THERE was me and Jim on the far-flung borders  
When war was declared and there came orders.  
We was sort o' tradin' and makin' a bit,  
Was me and Jim when it came for to quit.  
And the partner and mate in with Jim and me  
Was a parson's son who followed the sea,  
As tough as whipcord, with a voice like a gal,  
And a nice fine way; but a real good pal.

O' course you don't know, and it ain't very clear,  
But that's 'ow it was we came to be 'ere;  
For Jim and me, well—we rejoined, as we should,  
The parson's son did the best that he could;—  
Followed us 'ome and to be in at the shine,  
Joined Jim and me in the foot o' the line.  
For no doubt and for sure a very fine three  
Was that parson's son and old Jim and me.

Yet some'ow I wish that it 'adn't been so,  
For the parson's son 'e was young to go,  
And old Jim, though turning a little bit grey,  
Still 'ad the best of a very long way.  
Yet they wanted three for a job to be done—  
And a parson's son is a parson's son;  
So he offers 'imself and me and old Jim,  
Which was just the way that 'e 'ad with 'im.

A nice little job in the wet and the dark  
Between the trenches—'e called it a "lark,"  
Acrawlin' and slidin' and watchin' each shell,—  
'E 'ad called it a "lark," we called it "'ell."

Those star-shells and flares they was wakin' the  
night,  
A most unwholesome and nerve-wrackin' sight;  
And yet—over the trenches went all o' we,  
What the firin' line called "The 'oly Three."

And we 'adn't gone far when we struck the 'un,  
And one o' us three got knocked out and done;  
For the parson's son, he was spotted and seen,  
And a bullet came and it drilled 'im clean;  
And Jim, like a fool, 'e went after our mate,  
And o' course, like a fool, met the same fate;  
And I, well—it seemed I went lookin' for Jim,  
And found 'twas the end o' the parson and 'im.

. . . . .

There was Jim and me on the far-flung borders  
When war was declared and there came orders.  
But course you don't know, and it ain't very clear,  
That's 'ow it was they got blotted out 'ere.  
For the partner and mate in with Jim an' me,  
Was a parson's son that followed the sea.  
Oh that was our number, but out o' the three,  
Jim and the parson 'ave left only me.

.

“ BE WITH US, LORD ”

THROUGH doubt and sore oppression,  
Undaunted, undismayed,  
Lord God of many battles  
Bid us stand unafraid.  
Over rolling beat of drums,  
Victory's trumpet blare,  
Teach us might of mercy, Lord,  
And hear us this our prayer—  
That Thou, and Thou alone, shalt guide  
Where lust and pride of battle ride!

In this our hour of trial,  
Teach us to bend the knee,  
Through blood and sweat and anguish,  
Teach us to follow Thee,—  
Knowing, though foul deeds be done,  
And foes are sunk in shame,  
'Tis Thou Who guards the outer gate,  
'Tis Thou Who deals the blame.  
And oh! we pray Thee, guide our sword,  
In death, in life, be with us, Lord.

With watching, wakeful legions,  
Steadfast and fearing nought,  
Be with our marching vanguard,  
Be with our poorest thought.  
And let no vauntful boasting,  
No foolish speech or pride,  
Impair our fighting vigour,  
Where death and triumph ride;  
But knee to knee, and rein held tight—  
Guard, guide, and hold our battle might.

Be with us now, O Father,  
Teach us this last crusade  
That firm and certain purpose  
Which Thy full law has made.  
Alert, well-armed, and watchful,  
Till dawn breaks wide at last  
And earth receives in fullness  
That which her night has past.  
But oh! we pray Thee, Father, Friend,  
May we endure until the end!

## PHILOSOPHY

If I go under, does it matter much,  
What of my comrades on the other side?  
Men in a world of men, and who as such,  
Laughed, fought, and died.

Let me forget myself, forget my all,  
Do what is given, leaving God the rest,  
And with my comrades marching, live or fall,  
Doing my best.

## NOT BY EACH CONQUEST

Nor by each conquest judge us, Lord,  
Nor by our legions nor our might,  
By victory nor gleaming sword,  
By flashing steel and battle might,—  
Judge not by these, nor vaunted fame,  
By stricken field and agony,  
By shot and shell, by fire and flame,  
Judge rather our humility.

Judge that we gave, and giving all  
Prayed that our strength might vanquish hell,  
Steadfast and strong to rise or fall,  
So that we did what Thou deemed well,—  
Judge this, forgetting roll of drum,  
The charge, the brazen trumpets' blare,—  
Judge only we have overcome  
The darkness of a world's despair.

Judge this, and all the hopes we gave,  
The gift, so that we stand unshamed  
By what is done. By what we save,  
Judge us, O God, by this unblamed,  
Till burning beacons light each hill  
And England wakes to peaceful day.  
Till then we pray Thee, striving still,  
We arm our legions for the fray.

## VOICE OF EMPIRE

ECHO thy drum-beats round the world once  
more,

Outwards and inwards and both near and far,  
Loud blare the trumpets, till from shore to shore  
England we arm, and arming, march to war.

With silent pride we watch our manhood go,  
And yet unsatisfied, thou bid'st us yield  
Even our all, so that we check the foe,  
And keep still stainless England's honoured  
shield.

Thine and our own, O mother, we will dare  
Even to death, so that thou shalt not fall;  
In witness, mother, lo, our sword lies bare,  
England, our England, we will yield thee all.

High-souled and fearing nought, mother, 'tis we,  
Blood of thy blood, thy younger born stand  
forth,  
Eastward and west, where palm-groves meet the  
sea,  
Guards of the south and keepers of the north.

From lands beyond the hills, from bush and plain,  
Our countless legions, marching, onward come,  
Till all the world re-echoes back again  
The fifes of war and distant beat of drum.

Louder and louder, while their marching feet  
Full cadence give, till in a distance far  
Sight loses sight, and sound and darkness meet  
Where passing night reveals the morning star.

While far across the sky, from east to west,  
Blazoned in gold and stark against the morn,  
March those whose souls have sought the higher  
quest,  
The first crusaders of a world new-born.

The phantom armies of the years now sped,  
Brothers of yours and mine, we hear their call,  
Their crimson pathway, splashed with death's  
dark red,  
Leads onwards, upwards, beckoning to us all.

## 1914 TO 1918

WE come, we go, and with the years comes peace  
as well as war.

So will the tides roll in and ships come home,  
And, maybe, anchor in the roads as once of yore  
They came and went ; so shall we find our goal,  
When peace wraps all the world and drums have  
ceased to roll.



## THE NURSING SISTERS

Down the long wards and in the tented field,  
Through heat of days and fever-stricken  
nights,  
Where'er war's deadly sowing bears its yield  
In sickened harvest, or more bloody sights.

Where'er each ghastly terror marks the blow,  
And in full witness lays its crimson hand,  
Naked and blatant, so that all may know  
There, midst its terrors, works God's angel  
band.

Silent and watchful, hushing some poor soul  
Whose fevered torment or whose aching pain  
Finds voice to word the anguish of the whole,  
Or where the call of "Sister" breaks the  
strain.

Till raving fever seizes him once more,  
And darkened terrors crowd the shadowed  
mind,  
The shrieking chaos of a world-wide war  
Engulfs his soul, and in his frenzy blind—

He calls on God to ease the roll of drum,  
Shouting the charge and cursing each flung  
shell,  
Till his poor brain, surfeited, overcome,  
Has plumbed the very depths of war and hell.

And Christ is lost, for hell hath gained full hand,  
And nameless terror mocks and mouths his  
bed,—

To such an one the sister's cooling hand  
Gives peaceful hope and courage all but sped.

And ghastly terror loses half its blow  
Through woman's pity and a nurse's hand,  
And ye who doubt, come ask of us who know,  
Where midst the carnage works God's angel  
band.

## A SONG OF THE FOOT

WE are the masters, the masters in war,  
Masters of horse and masters of gun.  
Oh we that have been both now and before  
Are masters of all, servants of none.

Aye and beyond, before gunner and sword,  
When arrow and pike rallied at call,  
And as we were then, so now we are "Lord,"  
We are the masters, masters of all.

Look to the guns when we harry the foe,  
Hold us, keep us, they dare not nor can  
Sweep us with shrapnel, with blow upon blow,  
We are the masters, we are the van.

Low in their saddles, with sabres all bare,  
Horsemen, airmen, may circle and ride,  
Yet fly where they can and charge as they dare,  
We are the foot, the vanguard and pride.

For we are the masters. Horses and guns  
May thunder and charge, limber and wheel,  
Yet we are the masters, scourge of the Huns.  
We are the foot and we are the steel.

## THE ANSWER

### THE MOTHER

O my mother, they are calling,  
Must I stand and see them go?  
Would ye have me tarry, mother,  
When my country's bugles blow?  
See each four so steady marching,  
See the columns swinging by,  
Twice ten thousand knights for freedom,  
And not one afraid to die.

Oh, look over yonder, mother,  
"Ah, nay son of mine, no more,  
For 'tis I that will not hold thee,  
O thou little one I bore.  
Thou once curly headed baby,  
Be it thine to do and dare,  
Go, son of mine, God guard thee,  
And Christ keep thee in His care."

### THE WIFE

Wife and child of ripened summer,  
Dainty petal but half-blown,  
Thou sweet brown-eyed, laughing beauty,  
Must the trumpets leave thee lone?  
Fairest bloom that shamed each blossom,  
One far sweeter than the rose,  
Yet to "boot and saddle" sounding,  
Hark, the brazen trumpet blows.

Over yonder see the squadrons,  
"Nay, dear heart of mine, let be;

Go thou, my knight for Christendom,  
And God bring thee back to me.  
While I on bended knees in prayer,  
    Seeking strength 'neath darkened skies,  
Shall find once more my answer there,  
    And greater love where duty lies."

. . . . .  
Then go, son and husband, loving  
    Wife and mother bid thee go,  
They have answered as they answered  
    In the days of long ago.  
There's a straight path leading forward  
    While behind the love-lights shine,  
'Tis South Africa for freedom,  
    And God guard our battle line.

## A SONG OF MANY SONGS

For one long sight of England,  
And England's open shore,  
The gardens out at Shirley  
And English lanes once more.  
To see Southampton Water,  
To feel, to hear and know,  
That up and down the Channel  
The English ships still go.

To hold the world as youngsters  
And swear by things supreme,  
For thoughts were worlds and kingdoms,  
But phantoms of a dream.  
Yet you who climbed the cedars  
Now tramp in fields abroad,  
And you who led us marching,  
Now ride to clank of sword.

Not one now rides in England,  
Not one now holds the rein,  
But somewhere, westward, southward,  
We tramp both veld and plain.  
From lands that held thy borders,  
O Mother hear us cry,  
We that were reared in England,  
And gained our strength thereby,—

Still love thee, love thee dearly,  
And fain our road would wend  
Back from the first beginnings  
To the last bitter end,

That we might stand as brothers,  
Once more upon thy shores,  
And feel once more the shelter  
Of thy wide-open doors.

Is there no homeward transport  
For him who first to go,  
For him who left us playing,  
The outward road to show ?  
And we who followed after,  
Each one of us and all,  
Who, laughing, left you England  
To answer each his call.

Is there no safe provision,  
Must we remember so  
Thy white cliffs and anchorage  
Which proudly bade us go ?  
Picking up the new ways hard,  
And never heeding why,  
And yet we turn to England  
When we lie down to die.

With nothing left to offer  
Beyond our heritage,  
We many sons of England  
Who drift from age to age.  
Lo ! faith our hands are empty,  
And yet our hearts have dared  
To face the world for England,  
When England's sword was bared.

And there is one still witness  
Beside thy golden shores,  
A weak and waiting mother  
Who sits within thy doors.  
And there be many like her,  
Whose sons have left to roam,  
For England, thy full glory  
Lies in their hands at home.

And lo, once more our answer  
To this last call of all,  
O we who left thee laughing  
Now hearken to thy call.  
What we have done, O mother,  
Though little it may be,  
We still yet gladly proffer  
Our fighting arm to thee.



## COMRADES ALL

Fill up your empty glasses,  
Push back your chairs and stand;  
The trumpets wake the passes,  
The drumbeats hold the land.  
Fill up the empty glasses,  
In silence, standing, drink,  
To plains of waving glasses,  
To memory's last link,  
While over all there thunders the tramp of  
marching feet.

The cross that marks the hillside,  
The cross that marks the plain,  
To trumpet, sword, and war-pride,  
To comrades lost and slain.  
Fill up, fill up your glasses,  
In silence, standing, drink,  
For they who forced the passes  
Hold memory's last link,  
While hushed beneath the thunders go marching  
phantom feet.

## MARCHING SONG

TRAMP, tramp, tramp, and have we lost the beat  
of it?

Are the trumpets silent, are the bugles still?  
Tramp, tramp, tramp, and have we lost the lilt  
of it?

Are the drums still rolling out beyond the hill?

Marching, glory, with all the girls a-weeping,  
Trumpets sounding shrilly over veld and vlei.  
Saddle up, waken, you who lie a-sleeping;  
Waste no time, nor doubt not, mount and  
march away!

March, march, march, all shouting mad and  
drunk with it,  
(Mothers that have born us pray to God above);  
March, march, march, all through the heat and  
sweat of it,  
To a world's dominion through the might of  
love.

Bugle call, trumpet, bridle chains a-clinking,  
Rifles gleaming dully, hot against the sun;  
Marching, we ask you, pray for us all—thinking,  
In the days of battle till the fight be done.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, nay, we have lost no beat  
of it;  
There are bugles calling, trumpets sounding still.  
Tramp, tramp, tramp, nay, we have lost no lilt  
of it;  
There are drums still rolling out beyond the  
hill.

## THE OUTPOSTS

Our navies, and armies, and guns,  
Hark! how they trumpet and cry,  
Yet we, though we harry the Huns,  
Blazon no sky.

All scattered, and far-flung, and wide,  
Owning no squadron and name,  
Yet we, even we have our pride,  
Glory, and shame.

Though taking no heed for each day,  
Struggling and striving anew,  
Harbouring no refuge nor stay,  
Scattered and few.

Yet ours is the pride of the veld,  
Scouts of the ranges afar,  
Veld-hardened rough and her child,  
Children of war.

All lonely we watch for the foe,  
Lonely the bullet that kills,  
And some one is dead, did you know?  
Shot in the hills.

Our navies, and armies, and guns,  
Hark! how they trumpet and cry,  
But we who find death in the hills,  
Lonely we lie.

## “ IF WE SHOULD FAIL ”

HAVE we yet done our best, yet done our all,  
Given our strength, our manhood, and our  
might ?  
Above the roll of drums, the bugle call,  
Can we make answer we have done the right ?

Standing full-faced and unashamed of nought,  
Proud in the certain knowledge all is well,  
Dear Christ that dwells a witness to our thought,  
Can we full-voiced a tale of duty tell ?

The last lone farm, the lands beyond the rise,  
Where earth meets sky and sons no longer ride—  
Can we point outwards and 'neath foreign skies,  
Proclaim 'tis there we vaunt our youngest  
pride ?

That we have paid the dearest price of all,  
The price our fathers and our mothers paid—  
That we will stand and live, or die and fall  
By that full-faith our fathers fought and made !

Yet should we fail and all our words prove nought,  
How shall we answer when the roll is read ?  
Ashamed and more than shamed, in word and  
thought,  
If we should fail, 'twere better we were dead !

## THE WIDER VISION

THERE where the land lies lonely,  
Waste after waste untrod,  
Where neither man nor creature  
Holds intercourse with God.  
There where the night winds whisper,  
And only stars hold sway,  
Where only silent mountains  
Await the break of day.

There out beyond the skyline,  
Tucked in between the hills,  
It seemed that I lay sleeping,  
All freed from human ills.  
With naught save I, and only,  
Or so to me it seemed,  
Fair shapes that crossed the mountains  
And whispers that I dreamed.

For in that lone lost valley,  
Among the long dry grass,  
Methought that shapes came crowding  
And smiling down the pass.  
And through the rustling grasses  
Stole voices low and sweet,  
Which bade me leave my slumbers  
Their whisperings to greet.

And I, who knew but little,  
Waked stupefied and dazed  
In doubt and fear and wonder,  
All fearsome and amazed.

Then, rising, gazed dumbfounded  
On each fair face serene,  
Till one whose eyes held glory  
And wealth of things unseen—

Came smiling through the grasses,  
And holding high her hand,  
Did sweetly smile and bade me  
Behold another land.  
And as she spoke the curtains,  
Which veil poor human eyes,  
Drew back from my poor vision,  
And seeing I grew wise.

For that which lay before me  
Was passing sweet and fair,  
Each flower had its counterpart  
An astral shape to wear ;  
And that which I thought only  
The first part and the end,  
Was but the all beginning  
Of that which hath no end.

For with my clearer vision,  
I saw things fair and true,  
And realised then only  
The little that I knew ;—  
How this poor earth is crowded  
With fairer shapes than we,  
Whose spirits, rising higher,  
Have soared to spheres more free.

Who scorning earthly conflicts,  
And bloody strife and fears,

Have lost, with earthly bodies,  
Their human griefs and fears.  
And yet have gained, in losing,  
Far greater thoughts and love,  
And still come back to guide us  
Their new-found joy to prove.

And as I gazed, full seeing,  
And watched each comrade, friend,  
Grown wiser and more beautiful,  
I knew there was no end.  
For with them little children  
Passed by in spirit guise,  
And they, I knew, were comforters  
To tear-dimmed mother eyes.

Then she who stood beside me,  
Held forth once more her hand,  
And smiling, whispered gently,  
"Take heed and understand.  
See yonder waving grasses  
Where night-winds shimmer weak,  
Behold, and gazing yonder,  
List to the words I speak."

"Behold!" she said.  
And speaking veiled the vision,  
And thoughts of all things wide,  
As with her hands uplifted  
And her close by my side.  
Changed yonder waving grasses,  
Changed each brave face I knew  
Yet, as I gazed and wondered,  
Lo, each fresh phase rang true.

“Behold!” she said,

“There is nought in the wrack to the east,  
There is nought in the wide-spread west,  
And the south and the north lie lonely,  
Then, friend, of the four, which is best?”  
And I looked to her eyes and wondered,  
The faith that was in me grew small,  
“I know not,” I said, and I marvelled,  
“For the one that is one is all.”

And she smiled, “O soldier of earth-time,  
O thou school of the unborn years,  
Gaze, gaze, on the widespread lonely blank,  
And the depth of the unshed tears.  
Art learning, and that which thou seest,  
The thousands and thousands before,  
Have passed by uncared for, unheeded  
And have touched not the full-reaped store.

“The shadows that hang to the westward  
Are the curtains that veil the night,  
And that which ye’ve seen was the lifting  
Of that which is written aright,  
Then list to the song that is singing,  
Oh list how it falls on the ear.  
For the death that ye dread, O mortal,  
Is life that is in thee and near.

“’Tis earth’s crowning fullest achievement,  
That ye shall behold with thine eyes,  
Then lift up thy heart and go forward,  
Oh listen, take heed, and grow wise.  
Then take heed, O soldier of earth-time,  
And seeing, crave thought that ye know;  
And knowing, pray God in the heavens  
That thy knowledge take root and grow.”



And then, as ceased her speaking,  
The west grew bright and clear,  
And distant tramp of thousands  
Fell light upon the ear,—  
With beat of softened music,  
Till now it seemed to me  
That with the sound of singing  
Was born some mystery,—

Which held me for one moment,  
Perplexed, distressed, and sad,  
For some were marching bravely,  
Undauntedly and glad.  
Yet others tramped in silence,  
And saddened those behind,  
For they who followed after  
Marched forward as if blind.

Till nearer, lo I knew them  
As some who walk this earth,  
Poor sad misguided mortals,  
Unhappy from their birth.  
And they were blinding thousands  
Who erstwhile were content,  
And as I gazed they, mocking,  
Sowed bloodshed where they went.

And jealousy and hatred,  
Marched broad-wise hand-in-hand,  
I saw a ravaged country,  
A violated land.  
I saw, ah! God have mercy  
That such things ever be,  
Women curse their womanhood,  
And men man's liberty.

Till, seeing which, those legions  
Who marched so bravely on  
To peace and quiet equity  
Where hope eternal shone,  
Bade those who marched so blindly,  
Far-out beyond their ken,  
Rise up to claim their manhood  
And take their stand as men.

And cast aside that judgment  
Which preaching nought but pain,  
Sabotage and violence,  
Would rend fair lands in twain;  
And rouse those violent passions,  
Worst foe of all men's foes,  
Which ever waiteth watchful  
Earth's virtues to oppose.

Then, as I gazed and wondered  
And knew not what to say,  
Lo! those that followed after  
Rose up to greet the day.  
And as they marched in thousands,  
The sky grew clear again,  
And lo! the fields had broadened,  
Sown rich with golden grain.

I saw one world dominion,  
A league of nations stand,  
I saw beyond the skyline,  
Beyond the farthest land,—  
All standing high I heard it,  
Above the crash of gun,  
The silver trumpet ringing,  
The day of battle done.

And jealousy and hatred  
Fled outwise with the night,  
And where the clouds hung heavy  
Now shone the morning light.  
Through the whispering grasses,  
Which nodding softly bent,  
I heard the dawn-wind calling,  
And closed my eyes, content.

Then softly through the grasses  
Came she who still stood near,  
And bidding me take courage  
And cast out earthly fear,  
Would have revealed still further,  
But I, confused, dismayed,  
Drew back in fear, dumbfounded,  
Sore-stricken, and afraid.

Till, seeing which, she, smiling,  
Stayed what I would not see,  
And giving back earth's vision  
Receded far from me.  
And only through the darkness  
Could I still hear her voice,  
Which bade me, earth-bound soldier,  
Go forward and rejoice.

"For lo," she said,  
"There is nought that ye have not heeded,  
And ye have read the woes of earth,  
Ye have seen it in strife and discord,  
And that which man sows from his birth.  
Ye have seen the joy of the toiler  
And the peace of an honest life,  
Ye have seen the wind of discontent  
And the curse of a bloody strife.

“The heart of the world ye’ve seen, ah me!  
And the saddest lesson of earth,  
That which men learn through sorrow and pain,  
And through pain are given new birth.

“Yet men shall work in the years to be  
In the strength of a new-born life,  
Old, old fields shall be garnered anew,  
As the love of a new-wed wife.  
And men shall work for the joy of work,  
And content with a sight grown wise,  
They shall see those things they saw not of  
old,  
And a truth where they once saw lies.

“For those who were first revealed to ye  
Who are with ye and yet are not,  
Although they walked on earth and have died,  
And are now by the world forgot,—  
They still are with thee as here this night,  
And though hidden from earth-born eyes,  
The truths ye know not are theirs to know,  
And they, they guide your counsels wise.

“They that have fought in this last great war,  
Think ye they have bled and in vain,  
Heroes that fought for the truth of God  
And who died with the battled slain;—  
They who were once of the earth, earth-born,  
Think ye they are playing no part?  
Hush, little earth-bound soldier of God,  
They are guiding the world’s great Heart.”

Then all seemed sad and silent  
Forgotten and bereft,  
And in the hush of waiting  
It seemed once more I slept.  
Till that which was the dawn-wind,  
Passed lightly where I lay,  
And, lo, the stars had faded,  
I found the night was day.

## L'ENVOI

GOOD-BYE, farewell, yet still the battle rages,  
Still rank on rank our marching feet go by ;  
Gun follows gun, and still war's bloody pages  
Mark down the heroes and the men that die.

Over the hills the trumpets still are ringing,  
From seas beyond the bugles still are blown ;  
Not yet the end, not yet Peace's song is singing,  
Still march we onward, still the charge is blown.

Yet through the sorrow runs the deathless story—  
“That we have given so that we might save”—  
And on, still on, till dawns that day of glory  
When we shall march no longer to the grave.

Till then we fight, and fighting grow still stronger  
In faith, in courage, till day dawns at last,  
When men will war and rage and fight no longer,  
When we shall finish and all strife be past.

Till then we march and hoist our flag the higher,  
Till then our bugles blare and echo long,  
For soldiers, 'tis we that hold a world's desire,  
We that shall conquer so that we be strong.

Good-bye, farewell, our guns are wheeling ; Cap-  
tain,  
Fling back the breech-lock, see they loose the  
shell ;  
Push on the foot, what they have asked for give  
them,  
Have faith ! fight on ! and know that all is well.

D526

.2

J6

404740

*Johnstone*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

